



CHILD CARE  
LICENSING BUREAU

# Michigan Child Care Matters

## Tech Corner

### Weather and Emergency Alerts

Most of us have received state-wide alerts on our cell phones regarding inclement weather and emergencies, but there are other useful ways to stay updated including school district alerts, local news and radio alerts, and partnering with your local emergency agencies.

**School Districts** - Many school districts have an email and/or text alert system. Oftentimes you can sign up for the alert system and receive notice about snow days and other weather events. Visit your local school district's website or contact them directly to find out if they have an alert system.

**Local TV and Radio Stations** - Local news channels and radio stations often send out emails and text alerts. The easiest way to sign up with news channels and radio stations is to visit their website. If you don't see a spot to sign up on the site, try typing in "alerts" in their search bar. The search bar on most sites is a magnifying glass in the upper right-hand corner.

**Emergency Organizations** - Sometimes your local law enforcement and/or fire department will partner with you as a child care business. They may have an alert system of their own to alert you of emergencies such as an active shooter or flooding. Reach out to your local agencies but be sure to call the non-emergency line.

By being informed and connected, you can help ensure that the children in your care are safe during an emergency.



## Issue 2023-4

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Tornado Watch **v**

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## Central Office Corner

A large part of planning for a tornado is identifying a tornado shelter area in your child care facility for everyone to gather safely. To identify a tornado shelter area, you should consider a location in your facility that has no windows and is located on the lowest level of the building. Potential tornado shelter areas include a storm cellar, a basement, a bathroom, a closet or even a hallway. Once your tornado shelter area is identified, it is important to consider what supplies, based on the needs of the enrolled children and child care staff members, may be needed while you wait out the weather emergency.

The following emergency supplies are recommended for the tornado shelter area:

- Child Care information cards.
- Extra cell phone battery or charger.
- Flashlight.
- Battery-operated radio.
- Water and non-perishable food/snacks.
- Formula and/or breastmilk.
- First aid kit.
- Extra batteries.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Toys, books and activity materials.
- Pillows, blankets and/or sleeping bags.
- Prescription medications for children or staff members.

This is not a complete list of supplies. You should be familiar with the needs of the children in your care to ensure that you are taking the appropriate precautions to minimize risk and keep all children safe while in your care.

# WEATHER ALERT

## Highlighted Rule of the Month – Emergency Plans – Tornado Watches and Warnings

### Center Rules

#### **R 400.8161 Emergency procedures.**

1. Written procedures for the care of children and staff for each of the following emergencies must be developed and implemented:
  - (b) Tornado.
2. The written procedures must include all of the following:
  - (c) A plan for shelter-in-place.
  - (e) A plan for contacting parents and reuniting families.
  - (f) A plan for how each child with special needs will be accommodated during each type of emergency.
  - (g) A plan for how infants and toddlers will be accommodated during each type of emergency.
  - (h) A plan for how children with chronic medical conditions will be accommodated during each type of emergency.
3. The plans required in (1)(a) to (d) of this rule must be posted in a place visible to staff and parents.
6. A tornado drill program, consisting of a least 2 tornado drills must be kept on file at the center.
7. A written log indicating the date and time of fire and tornado drills must be kept on file at the center.
8. Each child care staff member shall be trained at least twice a year on his or her duties and responsibilities for all emergency procedures referenced in subrule (1) of this rule.
9. If cribs are used in emergency evacuations, then all doors within the means of egress must be wide enough to readily accommodate the crib evacuation.

### Technical Assistance

Children with special needs may have difficulty in an emergency situation. Each emergency plan must address how each child with a special need will be accommodated in each type of emergency. The plan must be based on each child with special needs enrolled in care. If possible, the plan can broadly address a special need area, such as children with mobility issues.

A center may need to use specialized equipment when evacuating or moving infants and toddlers to another space. Check manufacturer specifications for weight limits when using equipment for multiple children. Refer to fire safety rules for using cribs to evacuate.

A plan for shelter-in-place and lock down procedures in which parents will not have access to enter the building must be created; parents should be notified of the plan in advance to avoid panic.

In order to document compliance during the two-year licensing cycle, the center must keep drill logs on file for two years.

Training on emergency procedures counts toward the annual clock hours of professional development as required by R 400.8131(6). Verification of training must be kept as required by R 400.8131(11).

Compliance may be determined by measurement of cribs and doors or by demonstration of a crib evacuation. Standard cribs have a weight limit and may not support the weight of multiple infants and/or toddlers at one time. Read the manufacture specifications.

[Child Care Center Rules Technical Assistance and Consultation Manual](#)

## Home Rules

### R 400.1945 Emergency; plan; drill.

1. An applicant or licensee shall have a written emergency response plan for the care of children that must be posted in a conspicuous location within the child care home. The plan must address the following types of emergencies:
  - (b) Tornado watches and warnings.
2. The written plan must include all of the following:
  - (c) A plan for shelter-in-place.
  - (e) A plan for contacting parents and reuniting families.
  - (f) A plan for continuing operation during or after a disaster.
  - (g) A plan for how infants and toddlers will be accommodated in all types of emergencies.
  - (h) A plan for how children with chronic medical conditions will be accommodated in all types of emergencies.
  - (I) A plan for how children with chronic medical conditions will be accommodated in all types of emergencies.
3. A licensee shall inform all personnel of the overall emergency response plan and of his or her individual duties and responsibilities in the event of an emergency specified in subrule (1) of this rule.
5. A least 2 tornado drills must be practiced while children are in care between March and November, and a written record of these drills that includes the date must be maintained.
7. The records required in this rule must be retained for a minimum of 4 years.

## Technical Assistance

Infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and children with chronic medical conditions may have difficulty in an emergency situation. Each emergency plan must address how these needs are addressed in each type of emergency.

Examples of individual needs include but are not limited to

- Mobility issues
- Medications such as an inhaler, epipen, insulin
- Sensory integration issues such as loud noises, smells
- Individual medical needs

The caregiver must either develop a log or use the log on the department's website ([www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare)) to document tornado drills.

[Child Care Home Rules Technical Assistance and Consultation Manual](#)







A **Tornado Watch** means conditions are favorable for tornado development. Tornado watches, commonly issued a few hours before a severe storm could hit, are meant to alert the public of a developing threat for tornadoes.

Be on watch in case storms strengthen. Be alert.

A **Tornado Warning** means that either a tornado has been spotted and/or Doppler Radar has detected one. This means a tornado is imminent.

**Take action. Seek shelter immediately.**

### What should you do if you are in a tornado watch or warning area?

Stay aware of changing weather conditions. Remember, even if a tornado does not form, severe thunderstorms can pose a safety risk, too. Make sure your emergency supplies such as flashlights, water, and batteries are accessible.

If a tornado warning is issued for your area, you should immediately seek shelter and get to your safe place until the tornado threat has passed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends going to your basement or an inside room, without windows, on the lowest floor. Pick a place where everyone can gather if a tornado is headed your way. One basic rule is **AVOID WINDOWS**. Stay away from windows and keep them closed. An exploding window can injure or kill.

#### Child Care Homes

- The safest place in the home is the interior part of a basement.
- If you don't have a basement, go to an inside room, without windows, on the lowest floor. This could be a center hallway, bathroom, or closet.
- Avoid taking shelter where there are heavy objects on the floor directly above you. Heavy objects, such as refrigerators or pianos, could fall through the floor if the tornado strikes your house.
- For added protection, get everyone under something sturdy such as a heavy table or workbench. If possible, cover everyone with a blanket, sleeping bag, or mattress, and have everyone protect their head with anything available—even their hands.

If you live in a mobile home, go to your relocation site, if possible.

- Mobile homes can turn over during strong winds. Even mobile homes with a tie-down system may not be able to withstand the force of tornado winds.
- If you are not able to move to your relocation site, follow the above guidelines.

#### Child Care Centers

If you're at a child care center, follow your tornado drill plan.

- Proceed to your tornado shelter location quickly and calmly.
- Stay away from windows and don't go to large open rooms such as cafeterias, gyms, or auditoriums.

### WARNING

A warning is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is **occurring, imminent or likely**. A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.

### WATCH

A watch is used when the **risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly**, but its occurrence, location or timing is **still uncertain**. A watch means that hazardous weather is possible. People should **have a plan of action** in case a storm threatens and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.

### ADVISORY

An advisory is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is **occurring, imminent or likely**. Advisories are for **less serious conditions than warnings**, that cause significant inconvenience and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.

### OUTLOOK

An outlook is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is **possible** in the next week. Outlooks are intended to **raise awareness** of the potential for significant weather that could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.

# CHILD CARE LICENSING BUREAU AND LICENSEE PARTNERSHIPS

*Licensing consultants and licensees partner together to ensure programs and facilities meet state requirements and provide children in care a safe environment and enriching programming. There are times when the licensing consultant and licensee need to work closely together on a tough issue to create a positive outcome. MCCM will highlight one of these partnerships in each issue by sharing an interview between licensing and a licensee.*

**Below is an interview between licensing consultant Beth Gonding from the Southwest Region and licensee Jennifer Biggerstaff. This interview highlights the assistance Beth provided to Jennifer when relocating her child care home.**

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

Jennifer, how long have you been licensed?

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

For 2 1/2 years.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

You opened officially in May of 2020, right?

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Yes, yes.

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

Jennifer, has Beth been your licensing consultant the entire time you have been licensed.

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Correct.

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

I understand you are relocating to a new home.

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Yes. I applied for a new license, and I had applied for a grant and talked to Beth because there was a little bit of confusion and Beth had been there to try to help me walk through the steps that I needed and get ahold of the people I needed to get things straightened out.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

I think Jennifer is so kind as I had no idea about the answers because the grant was pretty new. So, she would ask me, and I didn't know, but I would start emailing people until I found the right answer. So, we kind of figured it out together.

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

Can you tell me about the issue?

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

I didn't realize that, because of the license I have now and then applying for a new license, I needed to have two separate emails to get the grant with the new license. I set that up, and I have received the grant, and I am now waiting for the paperwork to be forwarded to Lansing for my new license.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

I think that when Jennifer first applied, she didn't really know that she was applying for the grant. Since Jennifer was one of the first applicants to go through Our Strong Start, she was just looking to get licensed and ended up applying for the grant, which was good since she had time with her relocation. Jennifer has had some struggles and we are in contact with Lansing to get the license transferred for her new license.

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Previously, I was babysitting for friends. It was everybody that I knew that I was babysitting for, and then Beth helped me through the process of getting licensed. She's been amazing. When I was moving and looking for a house, I asked Beth, this is still in your area, right? Because she's helped me out so much, I didn't want to switch consultants.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

She's wonderful; she does a really great job.

Jennifer also coordinates with other licensees that do well. She has good connections outside of me, which is nice she has good people behind her that help her and give her information. That makes my job a lot easier, too, so she's easy to work with.

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Anytime I have licensing questions, Beth replies very fast to even silly questions. I text her, and then she'll either text me or call me back with the answer.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

Or I'll say I don't know, let me find it.

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

Jennifer, is there anything that you want to add about your working relationship with Beth?

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

I've been very happy. I mean, I was always scared to get licensed, and it was always nerve-wracking to me, and it's really not that bad.

**Beth Gonding (LARA)**

Jennifer does a really good job. She has had some significant life events and has been able to maintain and continue to have a license with full compliance. So, she definitely does really well and manages everything well. I'm excited for her and her new home. She'll be able to have some work/life separation.

**Jennifer Biggerstaff**

Yes, it's going to be nice.

**Jackie Sharkey (LARA)**

That will be very nice.

I want to thank you both for joining me today. I appreciate you coming on to talk about your working relationship together.

# GET TO KNOW US

Get to know the staff with a question each month. *How do you have fun on a bad weather day?*



**Linda Strube – Northwest Region**

- I snuggle up with my dogs and watch TV.



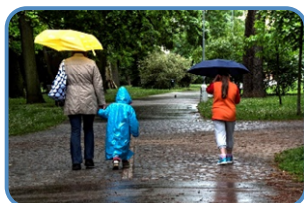
**Kelly Millar – Flint/Macomb Region**

- I like to watch Harry Potter and read a book.



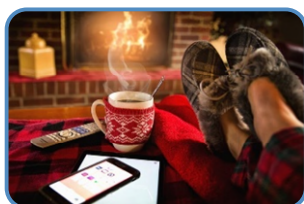
**LoWanda W Brown – Detroit Region**

- If I am not scheduled to work, I enjoy blasting my music and dancing around the house and playing cards and games with my husband and kids. We joke and spend much needed quality time.



**Jennifer Koluch – Oakland Region**

- Here in Michigan a “bad weather day” is very subjective. My family and I enjoy being outside even on days that some would consider “bad.” We just bundle up or put on raincoats and off we go. Of course, on some days no amount of outdoor gear will suffice and we end up spending the day indoors. During those days we like to find things to do as a family. Puzzles, Legos, card games, and movies night are our favorites.



**Anne O'Neill - Gaylord Region**

- On a bad weather day, I have fun relaxing with a book or movie in front of a warm fire.



**Amy Steger – Southwest Region**

- I enjoy being outdoors in all weather conditions as long as I am dressed correctly! If I end up stuck inside, I like to read or do a craft or puzzle on a rainy day and cook something warm and hearty on a snowy day.